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The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Chair and Members
Committee on Public Safety and Economic Development
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Written Testimony in Support of Mark K. Rigg, as Director of Honolulu Emergency Services
Department

Dear Chair Fukunaga and Members of Council and the Committee on Public Safety and Economic Development:

This testimony is offered in support of the nomination of Mark K. Rigg as the Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department ("HESD").

I have Known Mark for 22 years. Over the course of our relationship, he has been someone I greatly admired for his character and accomplishments to someone I call a great friend and motivator. Mark is someone who leads by example, whether it comes to his family, friends, career, or hobbies.

Most recently Mark helped coach/escort me to a victory in the Molokai to Oahu Solo OC-1 World Championships. When I knew this was a race that I wanted to win, I contacted Mark since he is a former champion. I was looking for him to be my escort and to possibly advise me on course. What I got from him was so much more valuable; he was not only able to provide me with his knowledge from his past experiences, he was able to read me and see what I needed. There were multiple times I wanted to quit, but Mark was able to provide me with the leadership and words of encouragement I needed to push through the pain. He helped me to take one step at a time and complete each part of the race until it factored into the end result. Focusing on the smaller steps to make a whole is not something I am good at, but it is a quality in Mark I truly admire, I see him apply this standard to his daily life and this is one of the many reasons I believe he is so successful. He is a team player, a teacher, a motivator, a listener, a leader, and a friend; these are just a few qualities that I feel support his nomination for Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department.

Mark has served the City and County of Honolulu for almost 30 years, beginning as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) following his graduation from Pepperdine University. With the exception of a brief detour to play professional volleyball in Italy early in his EMS career, Mark has worked continuously for the City and County, progressing through the field personnel ranks from EMT to MICT (Paramedic), into Division Management as a Unit Supervisor and Field Operations Supervisor (District Chief), and most recently into City and Departmental Administration as the Deputy Director of HESD from February 2011-December 2012, until his current nomination by Mayor Kirk W. Caldwell, as the Director Designate for HESD. Mark is uniquely qualified to lead HESD and its EMS and Ocean Safety Divisions. In addition to his decades of training and experience in the emergency medicine field, Mark is also an expert waterman with numerous world championship titles for 6-man, tandem, and solo outrigger canoe racing, and paddleboarding. He is also an avid surfer and endeavors to get in the water as often as his professional responsibilities will allow.

With dedication and tireless commitment to developing the "next generation" of EMS and Ocean Safety personnel, Mark has provided leadership and career development opportunities to numerous City and County employees in an effort to retain talented individuals and to ensure the continuous delivery of exemplary public safety services to residents and visitors to the Island of Oahu. Through his steady and effective leadership, Mark has worked hard to foster an environment where first responder personnel embrace and embody the core values of public service, uncompromising quality, and character. These efforts not only bode well for the City and County employees, but also for the thousands of people that come into contact with EMS and Ocean Safety personnel each year.

As Director of HESD, Mark can and will continue to make a difference between the ordinary and extraordinary provision of first responder services to our community. He is well poised to lead HESD into the future and to adapt to the challenges and circumstances that may arise along the way. As such, I respectfully request that this Council affirm the Mayor's designation of Mark K. Rigg as Director of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
James W. Austin III
3875 Lurline Drive
Honolulu, HI 96816